SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS.

BY

A MEMBER OF THE "ONE BODY" OF CHRIST.

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In vain we would combine the service of God, and Mammon; our expediency and lukewarmness are alike seen, and abhorred, of Him who has said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him *only* shalt thou serve."

Dost thou sow to the flesh, and wouldst thou reap of the Spirit? Dost thou sow tares, and wouldst thou gather wheat? Vain hope! "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap."

The Lord's people should bear a faithful witness to His name, for each one of them may be a blot—a dishonor to the name of Christ—or he may be a living epistle, known and read of by his brethren.

We go half measures in holy things, and offer a divided service, and a heart filled with our own devices; accordingly we reap as we sow; we have a little light, a little love, and a troubled spirit, that cannot trust God, even for "daily bread."

As the trail of the serpent is seen in the footsteps of the ungodly, so a track of light will mark the pathway of the just. Men will perceive this light, and glorify the author of it, even our Father in heaven.

Though living in this present world, and faithfully fulfilling all its claims and duties, we should yet be dead to it, for our service is to God, and not man, or ourselves.

The "quickened" life, is a witness for God, and the energy it puts forth shows His presence. The dead cannot praise Him, the living shall make known His truth.

As Jesus walked upon the waters, even *so* should His people walk in this world. He was sustained by faith, and by faith alone can they be kept upright upon the changing sea of life.

The life of God within us, is not merely a mindfulness of His presence, but also a continual act of worship towards Him.

We judge of one another harshly, because we possess so little of the love that "thinketh no evil."

We receive even in this life, far more than we resign; by giving up for Christ, we receive of Christ, and are filled with the spiritual, while we give up merely the natural.

Faith and prayer are stronger than the "strong man armed," and bring more blessings than all human might can reach.

Our aspirations after God are holy and healthy, when they quicken us in the performance of every relative duty; when we are not only "fervent in spirit," but also "diligent in business," serving the Lord in our employments, for herein shall our light shine before men, who know nothing of the communion of the soul with its Maker, except by the good fruits that result from it, towards *them*.

If we live not as those that are redeemed,—if we walk not closely with God in all holiness and love, then are we deniers of Jesus, and false witnesses before the world.

The poor, the destitute, the helpless, are made heirs of the kingdom to come. The strong, the rich, the full, are cast out. God has nothing for those who think they have need of nothing.

To have the constant and abiding presence of God—to live as in His sight—though on the earth to have the treasure in heaven—this is eternal life already begun.

The soul ascends in sacred fire. Its heavenward flight proves whence it came. Truly is "God manifest" in these mortal bodies, when His spirit dwelleth in them.

They that are hidden in the secret of God's presence, rest in perfect peace; His light shines round about them, and when others are "in great fear," *they* fear no evil, for He is with them.

Be lowly in heart, yet filled with lofty contemplations; the lower thou castest thyself before God, the higher He will lift thee up.

Let thy life be a living death to mortal things, for like the grain of wheat, it cannot be quickened, except it first die.

Faith reaches after, and secures heavenly treasure; it brings the future near, and enables us to live in it, instead of to the outward and visible.

Trim thy lamp, for the night is over thee; lay up of the precious oil that shall burn brightly when thy Lord cometh; He then shall be thy light, and "thy sun shall no more go down."

The more we enter into the mind of Christ, the more our faith will be that of little children—simple, implicit, dependent.

Do we go up to the House of God to meet *Him* there—to bow down with lowliness before Him—to be lifted up into the "heavenly places"—or is it with "itching ears," to listen to the words of man? Let us judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord.

What doth hinder our being filled with the Spirit? *The fullness we possess in ourselves.* The flesh quenches the Spirit, *our* wisdom shuts out God's. The empty vessel, not the full, He requires.

Examine well thy secret motives. Dost thou desire the praise of men, or dost thou shrink from it in fear and holy jealousy, as a dishonor to thy Lord, to whom alone all glory is due?

It is reserved for "the last days"—the "perilous times," for men to teach the fearful heresy, that

"Power is from the people." What saith the Scripture? "All power is of God." "The earth is the Lord's, *He* is Governor among the nations." Let God be true though every man be found a liar.

The Lord withers the flesh, to quicken the spirit. We must be utterly broken, before we can be made whole.

Would we fare better than our Master? He was despised and rejected of men; would *we* be honored and esteemed? He, in the judgment of men, was "a worm and no man," and shall we exalt ourselves before God, and our brethren? It is enough that the disciple be *as* his Master—that the servant be as his Lord.

We may not live to ourselves, for we are not our own, but His who has bought us at a costly sacrifice. Let us therefore offer and present unto Jesus, the body, the soul, and the spirit, that he has redeemed.

Does God in very deed dwell with man? Does the High and Holy One abide in this mortal body, and lift it up to hold communion with Himself? How holy and pure should the temple, *so* honored, be! How we should fear lest anything that defileth, enter in, and quench the light of God!

Can we love God and be fulfilling the will of Satan—can a fountain send forth sweet water and bitter—doth a vine yield thorns, or a fig tree thistles? Neither can a heart indwelt of the Spirit, fail to produce the fruits of righteousness.

A hair—an atom—will affect the eye, and obscure the sight, even so it is with the spiritual vision; the smallest degree of evil, indulged, will cast a shade over the things that are seen by faith, so as to render them no longer visible, and thus come sorrow and darkness. To keep the kingdom in view, we must have the eye single, pure, and undefiled: so shall the body be full of light, and the heart, of joy and gladness.

We do not know the power of prayer—the might, the strength, that can prevail with God Himself! He has committed to us, and commanded us to use, this wonderful engine of power, but we are slow of heart, and weak in faith to believe His word, and so fail to receive His full blessing, for ourselves and others.

As a people, we do not truly believe in Jesus, although His name is on our lips; we profess to love Him, but in our worldliness, and faithlessness, deny Him.

He that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, will not dwell with the unholy; if we would be blessed by His presence, we must be clean in thought, in word, and in deed; small sins, like a little leaven, corrupt the whole body.

Let us seek to be passive in the hand of God, that He may fashion us according to His will; He would take away all the dross, and refine us as gold, but we cannot bear the furnace, and resist each degree of the "Refiner's fire." Oh let us lay ourselves down at His feet, and say—"Thy will be done!"

If we knew, as we profess to know, our own sinfulness, we would not quickly take offence, but suffer long and patiently, feeling our unworthiness to be far beyond other people's estimation of it.

The Lord is hidden from the world through the unfaithfulness of His church. We, and our fathers, have sinned, and failed to manifest Jesus, as he manifested God. The light has been put "under a bushel"—the "salt has lost its savour"—what wonder, therefore, if "men cast it out?"

We have all had an unworthy estimate of our high calling, and been satisfied with low attainments, instead of pressing forward like runners in a race. The

will of God has *not* been "done on earth, as it is done in heaven," and with the words on our lips, we yet have not truly prayed—"Thy kingdom come!"

To live the life of Jesus, *our* life must be held in perpetual death.

Jesus cometh to the lowly and poor in spirit: the broken will is used of Him, and the crucified heart is His dwelling-place.

He that findeth the risen life, loseth his fleshly life, and becomes incorporated in "that holy thing" that was born of the Spirit.

Let us be content to be *nothing*: it is sufficient honor, that these "earthen vessels" contain a heavenly treasure!

If thou wouldst be lifted up to God, seek for "lowliness of mind." If thou wouldst "enter into the Rock," "hide thee in the dust!"

The world is intent on gain, and spares no pains in its attainment: let us take example by it, and gather "the true riches" day by day: as spiritual "merchants," seek we for the "goodly pearls," that we may "come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is only by being nothing, and less than nothing in ourselves, that Christ can live in us. He will not reign where *we* reign. He is not exalted when *we* are exalted.

Seek we to be brought low: so low as to be utterly "broken" and "dead:" thus shall the power of Christ rest upon us, and thus shall the earthen vessel—no longer filled from its own cistern—flow with "living water!"

Who are they that shall "walk" with Jesus "in white?" Such as now bend in lowliness before Him, seeking to know his will, and doing it:—such as have the "hearing ear," "the seeing eye," the "heart enlarged"—such as yield themselves "a living sacrifice," where nothing of self is left.

The Lord will have a humble and contrite people, whose "deep poverty" shall abound to His glory, for in their emptiness, He can fill them with His own divine fullness.

To be purified in soul and body, we must maintain a continual intercourse with Him who is "a consuming fire" to all iniquity.

O Worshipper, thy God draws nigh to thee! Thy Lord reveals Himself, and shows thee unutterable things —He opens to thee the sealed fountain, and gives thee to drink of the deep well of life!

Divest thy soul of every fleshly covering: strip from it all that is false and tortuous: so shalt thou walk with God, in holy joy and singleness of heart.

Instead of being "workers together with Christ," men are everywhere engaged in supporting and propping up their *own* systems. The House of the Lord lies waste, while they run every man to his own house.

Jesus became "God manifest in flesh," through the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost: His Body, the Church, receiving life from the same source, must also be a "holy thing"—of one substance with the Head, that she also may show forth, "God manifest in flesh."

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* The Church betrays her deep defection from her Lord, by despising His first great attribute, and the one that must distinguish all who truly follow Him. It is written—"God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." Do we not rather dwell in strife

* The "Church" is used in its large signification, as the company of the baptized people of God—The Body of which, Christ is the Head.

and division? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.

How easily is that heart ensnared by idols, that is not filled and sustained by its rightful Lord!

In these days of superficial religion, we know little of "the deep things of God," neither do we perceive "the depths of Satan." We need the "eye salve." the unction from above, to enable us to enter into the one, and avoid the other.

The watchful ones know their Lord's will, and discern His footsteps, when others sleep and see them not.

We should earnestly desire that God would cast out anything that hinders His perfect work in us, and that He would sweep away "the refuge of lies," in which we each seek to hide ourselves.

The great effort of our lives should be, to yield ourselves unto God "as those that are alive from the dead"—to seek to be so indwelt of Him, that every unholy thought, every unworthy impulse, shall be cast out, and find no resting-place in us.

The crucified flesh can receive the Spirit; the "new bottles," and they only, can be filled with the "wine" of the kingdom that "maketh glad the heart of man."

Lowliness becometh such as have received all from above. Dost thou possess anything not so received?—it is of thyself—of that nature that must be "utterly consumed." Humble thyself still more, if thou *hast* ought of thine own.

Our knowledge is worse than our ignorance; our wisdom is more hateful to God than our folly. Seek we His knowledge, His wisdom, so shall we indeed be wise, and holy, and humble.

If we stand not in the Anointed One, His anointing cannot flow down upon us.

Oh for the casting down of every high thought! For a loosening from the strongholds of the flesh! Then would the meek and holy Dove nestle in the cleansed temple, and these mortal bodies become a fit habitation of God, through the Spirit!

We reach after only *that* we see. He who has present things in his eye, will toil and strive to grasp them. He who by faith sees the Eternal City, will press forward with strong intent to gain it.

When the Church feels herself "the poor Widow," she will cast into the treasury of the Lord all that she has, "even all her living:" content to receive life alone from Him who is "the Bread of life."

"The Husbandmen" have not tended the Vine the Lord brought out of Egypt: they have plucked the fair fruit, and neglected its culture, and now the Vine is withering, and bringing forth wild grapes. Return, we beseech Thee, O God of Hosts, look down from heaven, behold, and visit this Vine!

The world has always hated the Church when her oneness with Jesus has been felt; it is when she is no longer His "faithful witness," that the world has become reconciled to her.

Men forget that here they are called to serve, not to reign; that they are stewards, not masters, and that the Master cometh to take account of His servants.

Thou canst not lawfully enjoy any gift of God that thou wouldst not resign to Him.

Shrink not at the "consuming fire" that destroys thy fleshliness; be willing like Isaac, to be the "burnt sacrifice," and thou shall arise a worthy son of Abraham.

How can the "living water" be poured into a full, or defiled vessel? The soul that would be "filled with the Spirit," must have no other fullness.

The abased and lowly, are intrusted with "the mysteries of the Kingdom." The "babes" drink in "the deep thing" that confound "the wise, and the prudent."

As the life of God within becomes the absorbing life, the things of earth look dim and shadowy; that only is firm and clear to us, upon which our constant gaze is fixed.

"Wait thou only upon God;" seek to know Him, for He is thy life; let every breath thou drawest be an aspiration after Him!

How empty and vain a thing is this mortal body, unless He, who made it, enter in and dwell therein!

Oh for Christ to be seen in His Body, the Church! For the living members in power and strength, instead of the "dry bones" that dishonor His name! How do the scattered parts need "compacting together!" How does the Body need the quickening Spirit!

Let not the flesh reign in thy mortal body; see that "The Lord reigneth"—that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in thee—that "the powers of the world to come" cast out, and subdue in thy soul, all other powers.

Let thy "measure" of love towards thy brethren be "full, pressed down, and running over;" the Lord will render to thee, even as thou givest unto them.

When thou hast laid aside thine own glory for the love of Jesus, He will *then* be able to use thee for His.